

THE ALMOST PERFECT CRIME



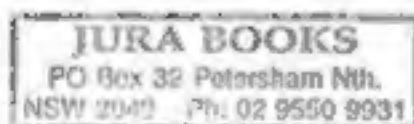
The Misrepresentation of
Portuguese Anarchism

Júlio Carrapato

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Kate Sharpley Library

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The Almost Perfect Crime
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01-04

Just think. Libertarian ideas started to penetrate Portugal around 1870 and during the first phase of the existence of the International Working Men's Association, the Spaniards Anselmo Lorenzo, Mora and Morato made a trip to Lisbon for the purpose of laying the groundwork for the Bakuninist Alliance. By 1879, figures such as the physician Eduardo Maia were calling themselves anarchists. However, Portuguese anarchism can be said to have really taken off around 1886 in the wake of the French geographer Elisée Reclus's visit to Portugal. In no time at all anarchism was making inroads among the populace, in the districts and in labour circles unhappy with formal republicanism and Jacobinism and with the electioneering socialism of Azedo Gouveia – and the very mention of the Spanish internationalists named earlier is ample proof that Portuguese anarchism was always a cosmopolitan and urban movement rather than the by-product of a backward nation as some "leftwing" sociologists would have us believe. Not that it did not also make strong inroads into rural areas like the Alentejo where agricultural labourers predominated. As the basis for its organisation it adopted the affinity group, setting about organising the people, setting up libraries and throwing itself into literacy campaigns – this in a country where 80% of the population was illiterate. And it laid the foundations for a first attempt at a mass organisation – the Anarchist Carbonari – before embracing the trade union movement as a whole at the 1914 Tomar congress when the UON (National Union of Labour) was set up, opting for what has gone down in social history as revolutionary syndicalism and, later, as anarcho-syndicalism. This was a trade unionism that repudiated political parties and drew a distinction between genuine revolution and mere coup d'état, drawing its inspiration from direct action and aiming to seize the entire apparatus of production, organising output and distribution of goods whilst steering clear of State and private ownership. This was a trade unionism which looked to the Charter of Amiens (1906) and which, turn and turn about, went by the names of Casa Sindical, União Operária Nacional (National Workers' Union – UON) and Confederação Geral do Trabalho (General Confederation of Labour – CGT). To get some idea of the extent of the libertarian movement in all its incarnations – and we would have to include here the Anarchist Federation of the South (1911), the Anarchist Federation of the North (1912) and the Algarve Anarchist Union (1912) – we need only remember that in 1919 (the year when the CGT was set up) the syndicalist daily newspaper *A Batalha* was launched. It survived as a daily up until 1927 at which point the fascist dictatorship forced it to shut down. By that time it was ranked No. 2 or No. 3 position in terms of newspaper sales nationwide. No other political or reformist

"trade union" denomination ever managed such a feat in the entire history of Portugal.

Plainly, the Portuguese monarchy, which had been oppressing the rural labourers for centuries, did not look kindly upon what had come over them: the "good folk" of Portugal were starting to lose their reverence for blue-blooded aristocrats. As early as 1888, Pinheiro Chagas received a beating for insulting Louise Michel, the anarchist heroine of the Paris Commune. And such beatings were followed by outraged protests against an unbearable situation: the industrialist Cipriano de Oliveira e Silva was assassinated in 1888, the civil government buildings in Oporto were bombed in 1889, the life of Augusto Forjaz, Sétubal city councillor, was attempted in 1890, the Spanish Consulate was bombed in 1892, and a device went off at the home of the Count of Folgosa in 1892. As historian Carlos da Fonseca has written "the sensational raid on the St Anthony procession in 1895, the attempt on Dr Joyce's life and two attempts on the life of the king himself (in 1893 and 1896) triggered the anti-anarchist law of 1896." But the repression that it brought in its wake was a mistake by the monarchy. Hundreds of prisoners were deported to Mozambique or Timor, many of them to die of dysentery or malarial fever: but the assassination of the king in 1908 stepped up the ante. The killing was the work of anarchists outraged by the king's tendency to appoint dictators like Hintze Ribeiro or João Franco. As one of the gunmen, Alfredo Luís da Costa, declared: "My greatest hatred, my liveliest repugnance are reserved for the bourgeois masters who exploit us and whom we shame-facedly serve." This is not the language of some republican poseur. Nor was Manuel dos Reis Buíça, the other assassin. Not to mention the third gunman in the plot, the writer Aquilino Ribeiro, a member of the same group as Costa. Since the premature explosion of a bomb being assembled in his rented quarters, Ribeiro had been living in the hills.

And then came the events of 4 and 5 October 1910. There is no point in our going into a detailed examination of the role of the Republican Party. The Party was very weak following the failure of 31 January 1891. Nor was the monarchy toppled by Machado dos Santos, the solitary rebel officer, with his 12 artillery pieces, 9 sergeants and 200 men holed up in the Rotunda. Much less the republican leaders who had made themselves scarce, holed up until they could see what way things might turn out. The monarchy was overthrown on 5 October 1910 by anarchists. As Carlos da Fonseca has it: "The real leaders of the uprising were gas-worker João Borges, barber Adelino da Costa Leal, photographer Virgílio de Sá, type-setter Artur dos Santos Silva, electricians Carlos Freitas and Santos, the blacksmith Bento Cruz, tailor António dos Santos and the fisherman César ... and lots of other anonymous contributors to republican history. It was they who

sabotaged the railway lines, cut communications, paralysed the monarchist troops with simple home-made bombs, disarmed the squadrons and, in short, hoisted the Jacobins of 1910 into power".

2

The period following the establishment of the Portuguese Republic marked one of the high points of social strife in Portugal and speaks volumes for the sort of "gratitude" that the Jacobin politicians and ruling classes felt towards the men whose handwork the events of 5 October 1910 had been – the anarchists. That must be why even today the democrats and neo-liberals avoid mentioning the matter, why the parliamentary socialists bury their heads in the sand and why the Portuguese Communist Party (PCP) is uneasy when the dense veil is lifted from this crucial period of history. As if they were so traumatised by the "long night of fascist rule" that the 16 years leading up to the 28 May 1926 coup and the accession to power of the seminarian from Santa Comba Dão [Salazar] were a bed of roses. But they were anything but a bed of roses and I would borrow Malatesta's words, when he declared that "if representative democracy were a good thing, the bourgeoisie would have kept it to itself".

Whereas it was not the republicans who brought down the monarchy, it was they who installed the Republic. Lest power fall "into the streets," this was what the republicans did. Once ensconced in power, they confirmed the old libertarian adage that nobody ever conquers power; it is power that always gets the better of its conquerors. By the beginning of 1911 it was plain that there had been a parting of the ways between the republicans and the anarchists. The Bourgeois Carbonari were given carte blanche to set up "Volunteer Battalions", a para-military militia specialising in fighting strikers. One of their first actions was to encourage the business-owners to cancel the one day a week rest recently won by their employees.

Another example of the pettiness of the employers and republicans: the eight-hour working day was beginning to come in during the latter days of the monarchy (around 1908), but only much later (in 1919 in the wake of the Great War) did it become commonplace, and afterwards it was enshrined in law (Decree of 8 May 1925). The law lagged behind practice. The national bourgeoisie was always ready to "readjust the balance", snatching away with one hand what it had "given" with the other, even though the proofreaders already had a 7-hour working day! It must have been for this reason and because it understood that Revolution is not decreed from on high and doled out through the so-called "Laws of the Republic" (on divorce, the family, civil registration, separation of

Church and State, on rents, etc.) that *A Batalha* announced that: "The only thing that counts is what the people has won and a gain won requires no law."

The 1910 Jacobins however sought lawful repression, as much as the regulations would allow. Since their "Volunteer Battalions" were merely an emergency measure dictated by "counter-revolutionary legitimacy", what was need was some heavyweight praetorian force to take over from the despised Municipal Guards of the monarchy. Thus was born the GNR – the Republican National Guard – a military force capable of overruling "lawfully constituted governments and indeed Parliament itself" (As the *Dictionary of Portuguese History* defines it). A decree of 12 October 1910 from the provisional government set up a commission to look into the practicalities of this: that commission was made up of Manuel Maria Coelho, Brito Camacho and General Ernesto da Encarnação Ribeiro. And a decree on 3 May 1911 established the GNR as the primary repressive force of the new regime. As we can see the abolition of one police force and institution of another is like removing salt and adding brine. Even so, the workers refused to be intimidated. Heedless of all these impediments they threw themselves into the tough strikes mounted by farmworkers in the Alentejo, miners in Aljustrel and S. Pedro de Cova and textile-workers in Covilhã among others, provoking a redoubtable tide of solidarity across Portugal, with families all over the country taking in strikers' children, as well as the children of railway workers who also embarked upon two big strikes ... most likely without giving due notice and indicating how long the strike would last! To get some idea of the republican response, we ought to remember that the "Alentejo war" of 1912 ensured that lots of strikers served years behind bars, sometimes until after the end of the Great War and this without formal charges or their being produced in any sort of court. Meaning that the fascists' *Estado Novo* (New State), with its "pre-emptive arrests" and heavy sentences attached to "security measures" invented nothing new. And Portugal's entry into the mass slaughter of 1914-1918 was prompted by two main considerations, one openly admitted and the other a guarded secret on the one hand, the need to protect African colonies from German ambition: on the other, the need to decapitate the international, revolutionary syndicalist workers movement by sending millions to the slaughter. Obviously, the UON and the Juventudes Sindicalistas (Syndicalist Youth) held out against the war which they regarded as a capitalist device for mass destruction and looting and well known libertarians like Neno Vasco, Aurélio Quintanilha and Manuel Joaquim de Sousa urged workers to desert. There followed rioting, shootings and hurried escapes to Spain, a country that held aloof from the world war. But the majority were caught in a trap, forced to don uniforms and serve on the battle front where they were used as cannon-fodder.

However, the organised libertarian and labour movement had not quite given up the ghost. Every bit as emphatically as they had rejected the imposition of the trade record-book and any form of control or "social compromise", as we should say these days, they unleashed the 1918 general strike against the cost of living and, looking beyond the 8-hour day, embarked upon campaigns for the 6-hour day. And their Jacobin enemies had not set aside their arms either and this contributed to the widespread contempt in which all political parties were held.

Without going into a detailed catalogue of all the republican atrocities, let me say that emergency legislation opened the doors to all manner of arbitrary actions and that reintroduction of the death penalty even came under consideration. Afonso Costa, a demagogue that promised folk "all the salt cod you can eat" earned himself a reputation as a "syndicalist-breaker" and attacks on the *A Baulha* editorial offices and CGT premises became quite commonplace, as did the murder and beating of workers. The sinister António Maria da Silva, by setting up a special court in 1922 and taking charge of the repression in 1923 to 1926, allowed the deportation to Africa of many revolutionaries without any sort of a trial, in part because judges refused to "consider" outstanding cases for fear of the retaliation from anarchists who had escaped the crackdown! The conditions by then were ripe for the military coup of 28 May 1926 and the rise to power of the smooth-talking António de Oliveira Salazar, a sorry executioner with all the right qualifications – being a monarchist, a Catholic, anally retentive, the owner of a "delicate" libido dating from his days as a seminarian, and a fascist sympathiser.

3.

The repression launched under the monarchy and continued under the Republic was carried over "naturally" into the fascist era, like some swollen river breaking its banks, proving that one regime is not necessarily the antithesis of the regimes that have gone before it. I am not trying here to "spruce up" fascism or render it "burea" by lumping it with other regimes, nor am I awarding it a particularly horrific status as certain ill-intentioned phony democrats might imply. No! I am trying to point up the criminality of all regimes without exception, to show that whereas they may have differences of degree they are not different in nature. Power is an absolute evil; Power – not this form of power nor that form of power (no matter how despicable). [...]

Now to the situation in which the Portuguese libertarian and confederal movement found itself when, following the army coup of 18 April 1925 which was frustrated by the alert sounded by *A Baulha* and by the people's vigorous backlash, it decided to intervene in a different manner on 28 May 1926. On the one hand, the anarchists had nothing in common with the bourgeois parties

which had always persecuted them and, given the implosion of the PRP (Portuguese Republican Party) with its rivalries and competition over the sharing out of posts and responsibilities, this prompted the most brutal and hierarchical part of the State to step in: on the other hand, the anarchists were well aware of what lay ahead for them should their old enemy, the army, come out of its barracks. Even so, no matter how skeptical or rather disillusioned it may have been, the CGT was still the only organization to call a general strike on 1 June. Its call went largely unheeded. In the wake of the "backlash" of 3-7 February 1927, the CGT was outlawed and the editors of *A Batalha* locked up. Do not think, however, that Portuguese fascism overcame Portuguese society in one fell swoop. It was a gradual process, on account of the time it took to get certain structures in place. After 7 years of roundabout military dictatorship – in which General Gomes da Costa took it in turn with Admiral Cabeadas to see which of them would gain the upper hand, whilst the crafty Oscar Carmona "the general with the good conduct medals" or "Caguincha (Yellow-belly)" as Gomes da Costa described him, rose through the hierarchy and the crunch only came when Carmona drafted in the ex-seminarian Salazar to solve some "book-keeping" problems and basic equations; when the 1933 constitution was endorsed by a plebiscite; and when the National Labour Statute which outlined out and out fascist-ization of the unions and their conversion into misanthropic medieval corporations under State supervision and subject to the employers' organisations came into force. Parallel with and during these "splendid" 1930s, a whole apparatus of repression was set up: there was the Portuguese Legion ("the green lice") to fight the enemy within; there was the paramilitary Portuguese Youth organisation to school young people ideologically in "wholesome" fascist principles; and there was the PVDE, the trial version of the PIDE, operating as a secret police with special powers, its sinister efficiency reliant equally upon brutal agents specialising in "timely blows", to borrow Salazar's own euphemistic expression, and upon a "flexible" and extensive network of amateur spies, generally paid by results. This was one way of ousting the military from day-to-day control and dispatching it back to its barracks and holding it in reserve for military parades only, other than dalliances with kitchen-maids or the occasional, rare exercise of armed coercion. The Roman Senate and emperors had done the same things themselves. They had not wanted to see the legions crossing the Rubicon and proceeding, under arms, down the Italian peninsula, because of the potential for trouble. They had preferred a Praetorian Guard to look after their day-to-day protection.

Reacting against its death, as foretold by the National Labour Statute, the CGT, which was having a hard time of it living underground, determined to launch an insurrectionary general strike on 18 January 1934. Except for whatever few stun

grenades or bombs it was able to put together, it was unarmed, as it had been back in 1926, in the face of the army's subversion, in spite of some empty promises from a few republican bigwigs who were, at bottom, more wary of some energetic response from the anarcho-sindicalists than upset by the fascist coup! And even though the CGT included most of the underground trade unions, it extended invitations to the few unions thrown up by the split engineered by the PCP in 1925 and which then made up the Inters-Sindical Commission (CIS) launched in March 1930, to the non-aligned unions and to the tiny associations and *casas do povo* (people's houses) which had been within the orbit of the self-disbanded (in 1933) Socialist Party and which went under the pompous title of the Federation of Workers' Associations. And the CGT claimed no special rights or privileged position for itself. The revolt, the high points of which were the sabotage and violent attacks mounted in Coimbra, Leiria, Monsanto (Lisbon), Almada, Barreiro, Silves, Vila Boim, Funcheira-Tunes-Algoz, Marinha Grande, Alto do Ulmeiro, Xabregas-Chelas, Povoa de Santa Iria and Benfica and in the peaceable strikes that took place in Barreiro, Sines, Almada and Silves was, however, defeated. Across the country many hundreds were arrested and nearly 260 were quickly convicted by the Special Court Martial and in 1936 the Tarrafal concentration camp was opened. So much for the short-term results of the attempted revolution. But there were even more drastic repercussions to follow: the CGT organisation was all but dismantled, in spite of later attempts to reconstitute it and the libertarian movement was reduced now to the specifically anarchist organisations – to wit, the groups of the Portuguese Regional Anarchist Federation (FARP), set up in 1932 and affiliated to the Iberian Anarchist Federation (FAI) founded in 1927, to tiny remnants of the Syndicalist Youth and Libertarian Youth. Even in these adverse conditions, it could still muster enough resources during the civil war in Spain to salvage the honour of Portuguese workers and help their Spanish colleagues fighting on all fronts against the concerted efforts of international fascism, British democracy and the French Popular Front as they observed a criminal policy of "neutrality" which merely operated in favour of General Franco and, last but not least, fighting also against Stalinism which, in return for war materials, was impounding all Spain's gold reserves and dispatching its goons and torturers to Spain, attempting to blind the world at large to the fact that the "civil war" in Spain was, ultimately, a redoubtable libertarian social revolution, the most far-reaching, radical experiment in self-management in the whole of history. Because of its authenticity and real chances of success, this revolution could scarcely help but counter the sinister reality of the so-called Soviet Union (without question the biggest lie of the 20th century). Thus, Portuguese anarchists bombed the Radio Club because of its pro-Nationalist

propaganda, there was the "bombs in the ministries" affair and they saw to it that German ships unloading all sorts of armaments in the de Alcantara for our Spanish fascists were targeted for sabotage. It all climaxed in July 1932 with the attempted assassination meant to strike at the system's weakest link – as would-be assassin Emilio Sanjaume described (him) – Salazar. But Salazar escaped unharmed, except for a blackened fingertip and the Spanish anarcho-syndicalists lost their war and revolution. The only possible retreat or logistical support base to which Portuguese libertarians could have looked were now with them. A single example will suffice to point up the contrast between action enjoying protection and those operating without back up: when the Balearian communist Aníbal was arrested by the Nazis in 1933 and charged with having set fire to the Reichstag, he was later released in 1934 and exchanged for agents of the Third Reich captured by the Russians when Vladimir Serebrennik was the would-be assassin of Salazar. fled to England, he was imprisoned by the communists in democratic Great Britain and served 16 years in prison in Folsom and Columbia, and was not released until 1953!

And having just mentioned an agent of Moscow, let us look at the disappointment path followed by the enigmatic PCP. Its predecessor was the short-lived Maximalist Federación which headed off a few ill-will from reading its newspaper *Bandera Vermelha* (Red Flag), formed at a moment that the famous dictatorship of the proletariat would be a very brief interlude and might even be exercised on a temporary basis by honest men with a conscience. As the well-known Carlos Riera was later to write, "Initially established in 1917, it initially enjoyed the cachet and mystery, but surrounded Bolshevik Russia with up behind its hermetic borders. It needed a few casts and with its last words such as José de Sousa (originally with the Syndicalist Youth) and an attractive opportunity, careerists and turncoats like Carlos Riera himself, who was to wind up in the National Union and ended in chief of the Plano de Alentejo during our fascist era. The PCP was involved in various political intrigues as an ally of one Radical Party or the Democratic Left and always advocated electoral action (without being "electorals" of course) to the detriment of the social struggle. Forever going on about unity as soon as it was in a position of hegemony, it had no hesitation in engineering a small split in the CGL in 1928 simply because it needed a transmission belt to raise its profile. Gradually it came out specialise in attacking the Confederation through news-sheets like *A Internacional* or later on, *O Profeta*. Its express aim was to detach the CGL from the IWA – the revolutionary syndicalist anarcho-syndicalist International based in Berlin in the 1920s and including organisations like the Spanish CNT, the Italian CSI, the French CGT-SR and, among others, the Swedish SAC – in order to subject it to

the dictates of the Red international of labour Unions (RILU) based in Moscow and advocate for a certain proportionality that could not but amount to a negation of the true spirit of internationalism. But it did not meet with much success in its efforts. Since the RILU and its only trade union affiliate were not even big enough to call the CIO meetings to mark May they asked the CIO for permission to join its marches and demonstrations and the CIO agreed provided that the disband supporters of the RILU would not undermine practical unity by singing the praises of any party. Three examples of what happened when this gentlemen's agreement was breached: when the "Red" or class blind trade unionist José L. Vares his famous speech in 1924 was up by the Spanish communist Martín Gaitan, one of the leaders of the RILU, to the headquarters of the CIO he was promptly rebuked that speakers with police charts were not unduly appreciated and the meeting degenerated into hostility when the RILU speakers like de Magon and Carlos Marques sang the praises of the Moscow based international in Spanish in 1925, 'the audience promptly walked out of the Railwaymen's Hall' and finally when on the last (last?) May demonstration in 1926, a fairly squeaky non-Communist speaker resorted to his obvious, divisive intrigues, he was "dismissed" by the audience with the organic material that his refined arguments deserved - now dung! [..]

As of January 1934 approached the RILU was "muzzled" again. Its general secretary Benito Gonzalez was opposed to any strike or international venture and argued instead for general meetings to setup up the workers to reject the National Labour Statute for agree stopping action in its tracks with study groups. But the RILU opted to double down and to urge the CIO into action. Otherwise it stated in a speech of blowing in the breeze, it would get it done. In short, if the spring strike in the RILU would have a bust in its camp but if it failed it would be written off as an "accidental failure". That in fact was the term employed by Benito Gonzalez in rebuking the spring strike as Ernesto Samyrna stated "hostility and animosity are not RILU features" [..]

Red trade unionism was wound up when following the 7th congress of the Comintern in 1935 RILU militants were requested by their leaders to enter the National syndicates. And once more and members sometimes being rewarded, we are cheered in the newspapers in the unions, come the revolution of 25 April 1974. Whereupon speaking from the heights in which they had a slightly climbed, we attempted to use the law to impose an authoritarian single trade union or enforced unity of the verticalist variety typical of fascism, Peronism or indeed Lenin-Stalinism. [..]

Two further features of trial proceedings in the Marzotto requests that require explanation. Why was it that the FAI did not "disappear" any of the only labour movement of any consequence at the time, the Agraria de B. January 1946, and a newspaper of 200,000 copies that it did not attempt to shut short-lived worker in Marzotto Grande newspaper which had been founded in 1947. This according to researcher Martin Rodriguez, "which first appeared to him as an attack on Portuguese Marxism in the 1950s, then as a reflection of his knowledge concerning the FAI but these 'consequences' at some point, that is that there might have been a 'workerist' perspective and a 'Marxist' Grande, took the form in the case of the survey, he added, of a 'mask' of the worker is merely a stratagem to draw attention away from the fact that the local glassworkers union contained communists and that, notwithstanding, as well known is the fact that the attack upon the FAI is quite any 'workerist' and as such a consequence of what would be a public battle to discredit opposition to the trade unions of Marzotto Grande by other forces that Marzotto Grande was scarcely one of the local pillars of the revolutionary power struggle in 1946. And given that the entire movement was sectarian in its attack upon the 'democrat' with the glassblowers concerning the other parties, there is no other than the other way round, the FAI that at the end of the 1940s was represented by the C. I. in Marzotto Neves, Almeida and Neves, given among others, that the FAI did not. And the request for this is placed in the middle of FAI presence in 1946 had the capability just back at the end of the sixties, and was not by the Special Court Martin and all incomes that Marzotto Grande was sentenced to be transported for 12 years was an action in which first of all was an and one of the leading lights of the FAI in 1946, a high position in 1946 January and he took charge of the uprising in 1946 and eventually José Ventura Tardá and José Alexander who were involved in sabotage in 1946 and got 18 year sentences in the middle of the 1940s. And the two were likewise charged (Prado and Araújo) for a sabotage and 12 years sentences the same but in a 1946 sabotage and the two were in 1946. And in 1946 the only FAI member who was in 1946 was in 1946. The sentence was Antonio Pereira from Marzotto Grande but in 1946 something really did about Marzotto Grande the first labour union in 1946 and group by secured in December 1945 through the intervention of a Henry, if that was made up mostly of glassworkers from Marzotto Grande. Yet another problem in the front of dialogue between workers and FAI is the FAI page. The aim of the matter is that the subject of the FAI letter may be to demand a 'workerist' perspective was to admit in the 1965 report that the FAI did not 'formally' in re-establishing its foothold in Marzotto Grande. Because of the inconsistencies a

Henri Gurgaher rejecting the uprising as an "matcho-funco" at the time and the P.P. only shamelessly "waiting" for the end of the same uprising" [1]

The P.P. could not be outside its own purposes when it came to "resistance" according to the P.P. Since that its quality its composed spirit in 1949 is drafted its new "ideology" criticism led it to the defeat of the Tarras concentration camp. What it proposed was creating an alliance between fascist and communist in the event of an attack upon these Portuguese overlords. Luckily the head torturer had a greater sense of shame than Henri Gurgaher, the chief torturer was an and author of his proposal. By rejecting any alliance in any circumstances the chief guard salvaged the party's "honour" [2]

The 1974 downfall of the fascist fascist dictatorship in western Europe resulted in euphoria. In Paris French comrades from the Anarchist Federation and Spanish comrades perceived this with vigour and only months after 25 April 1975 and after "the return of the guided" end in France and Brazil did I get to know them. The coming of course the men and women met in the Rue Auguste Rodin in Paris. In going out with the research of 4 Basilio in the event of the in Anarchist Cultural Center publishing the Anarchist or the others. In the Anarchist Center, Basilio in the Algarve caught up in the revolution and busy with other projects. I mean people such as Adriano Bontinho, Luciano Nardina, José Carlos Pires, Ruy Nogueira, José de Brito, Marcos Araújo, Sebastião de Almeida, Artur Mendes, Jorge Quintana, Francisco Quintal, Costa Azeite, José Bernardo, Azeite, Gurgaher, Azeite, Lúcio de Aquino, José Azeite, José Carlos Pires, Sebastião de Almeida, Hugo Azeite, José Paulo Costa, António Azeite, José Carlos Pires. Most of them by then in their late 30s. A few like Azeite, José Carlos Pires, José Paulo Costa. They made up what might be termed the 1975 liberationists. They were not too far from our own in military training technology. Mostly they were skilled workers, but not very well off. A few were brilliantly self-educated, the typical fruits of the school of hard knocks and wide reading. Without doubt these intelligent and cultured men and women made their social action in the Anarchist Center of Anarchist Syndicalism's functions with the genuine proletarian ignorance of the employees class. In addition they were all blessed with an outstanding sense of independence, organizational ability and initiative for freedom. They gave the lie to the immaturity peddled by "scientific socialism" and by the bourgeoisie war to the effect that anarchism never passed its infancy. When death is never not to be served they looked upon the social revolution as a series of projects of liberation from various perceptions and superstitions rather than as some reductionist cynical "transitional" dictatorship and, relying upon their own capabilities, they know that it is not beyond the workers to

achieve a world that is run directly by workers organised at local, regional and international levels. They had aged as good wines age and even though they were graduates of Salazar's prisons, racking up jail time that in some instances amounted to 10, 15 or 20 years, they avoided rehearsing their past when it was mentioned. [...]

I call to mind a few cases, neither isolated nor exceptional, related to me by some old folk with that unfussy calm that signals human bravery: António Caldeira's stunning escape back in monarchist times from deportation in Angola, his secret return to Lisbon, his recapture and further banishment to Guinea; the very turbulent life of Bartolomeu Constantino, a fiery orator, sometime journalist and shoe-maker who was in the Transmontana Workers' Union and died in poverty on 11 January 1916 at the age of 52, after he had been arrested on 36 occasions; José Caandeira's battles with the most reactionary and parasitical classes in the country (the landowners) in Alentejo under the First Republic and the communalist experiments of António Gonçalves, founder of the "Commune of Light"; the fraught life of Manuel Joaquim de Sousa, from the CGT secretariat, whose life was so often threatened by the republican police and the PCP-linked Red Legion alike; the exemplary life of Mário Castelhana – a universally respected anarchist and syndicalist – a practical man of plain ideas, author of *The Means of Transport and Social Change*, the driving force behind massive strikes and architect of 18 January 1934, deported in 1926 to Angola, in 1930 to Pico Island, from where he escaped in 1931 thanks to the Madeira revolt, after which he returned to Lisbon, only to be arrested again and sent with another 70 comrades as the first batch of prisoners to the Tarrafal concentration camp in 1936, to perish there on 12 October 1940 because "Doctor Death" (Esmeraldo Pais Pratas) refused him medicine; the courage of the Setúbal fisherman Jaime Rebelo who died in 1975, after serving in the Spanish civil war and as an exile in France and who, under torture by the PIDE, bit off his own tongue in an act that moved the historian Jaime Cortesão to pen the poem "*Romance of the Man with the Closed Mouth*". [...]

Exercising its right to criticise the libertarian "old guard" also explained the main reason for the strength of Portuguese anarchism and one of its patent weaknesses: that it was made up 100% of proletarians. True, writers like Aquilino Ribeiro, Ferreira de Castro, Mário Domingues, Assis Esperança or Jaime Brasil never made any bones about their sympathy with anarchism: even so, men like the lawyer Campos Lima, the teachers Aurélio Quintanilha, Emilio Costa or Adolfo Lima, the physician and polygrapher Abel Salazar, writer Tomás da Fonseca, journalists Julião Quintanha or Cristiano Lima and the regulars at the Café Venezia were exceptions in the overall picture nationwide. [...]

However it was not just the most elderly of the anarchists that I met in the aftermath of the 25 April 1974 revolution. Since Portuguese anarchism never dropped out of social conflict, no matter what its would-be pall-bearers might say, I also met those who served as a bridge between the most elderly and the younger generation. I am thinking here of people in their 40s or 50s in 1974, people like Moisés da Silva Ramos, Irene Nobrega Quintal or Lígia Oliveira. Then came people like Gabriel Morais Pereira, António Mota, Rui Vaz de Carvalho, Jorge Mota Prego, Paulo Ferreira, Carlos Pimpão, António Alvaro Carvalho or Artur Pinto, who were in their 20s or 30s. Followed by a few young workers and high school students like Vítor Sobral, Fábio or José Tavares. My apologies to those not listed here for want of space. These were the people on the basis of whom an attempt was made to re-launch the libertarian movement, quite a difficult undertaking, because the fascist repression had created a generation gap and because some of those coming over to us from the Marxist family carried a whole series of "political" vices, with all the negativity that this implies, and others, victims of the loss of certain qualities, had fallen under the "spell" of a questionable reformism. Even so, it proved possible to launch new papers like *Argão Direita*, *O Meridional* or *António*, as well as a publishing imprint, Edições Sotavento. During the so-called PREC period – from 25 April 1974 to 25 November 1975 – the AGAA (Association of Autonomous Anarchist Groups) emerged and, the groups at work (some of them affiliated to the FAJ, some not) and others set up an association to help re-launch the anarcho-syndicalist movement. Among the joint ventures embarked upon we should like to mention – the 3 March 1975 demonstration against the Iberian Agreement and in solidarity with Spanish workers, the only unmistakably anti-militarist demonstration held in post-fascist Portugal, at which the cry went up "Soldiers are sons of the people, Generals are sons of bitches" – the 1975 attack on the Spanish Embassy following Franco's execution of several Basque nationalists – a meeting that completely filled the hall of *Viso do Operário* and which forced *Expresso* to carry the headline "Portuguese Anarchism in Search of a Second Wind". But the problems with making oneself heard in a highly mediated, manipulative society became plain and covered a wide spectrum: at the time of the 3 March 1975 demonstration, newspapers like the *Diário de Lisboa* saw fit not even to report the slogan mentioned earlier and merely stated that the anarchists had stated that "soldiers are sons of the people." And, come the meeting just referred to, no hack dared to report that the most common statements were "the man ends where the soldier begins" or "fear of living free generates a pride in one's slavery".

Júlio Carrapato From *Argão Direita*, No 23, February-March 2003

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